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ABSTRACT

This is the English-language portion of the special examinations used by the authorities of the People's Republic of China in selecting the initial groups of Chinese coming to the United States under the official exchange agreement. The examination proper is preceded by an introduction which provides background information on the test itself and the scoring system. The written section of the test includes the following: (1) multiple choice questions on usage; (2) sentences for correction of errors; (3) reading comprehension passages; and (4) sentences and paragraphs for translation from English to Chinese, and from Chinese to English. The oral part of the examination consists of two sections: a short English paragraph to be read aloud by the examinee, and a free conversation period. (AMH)

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The English Language Test Used by the PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA in Selecting Candidates for Study Abroad in 1978-79

edited and with an introduction
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NOTE

This publication was written under the auspices of the U.S. Office of Education but came off the press after the Office's staff, programs, and functions were transferred to the U.S. Department of Education upon its establishment May 4, 1980. Although originally prepared as a publication for the Office of Education, an Agency no longer in existence, it nonetheless contains valid information as a publication for the Department of Education, despite any seemingly current references in it to the Office of Education, its Bureaus, other organizational subdivisions, or activities.

FOREWORD

One result of the normalization of relations between the United States of America and the People's Republic of China that took effect on January 1, 1979, is the substantial number of Chinese scholars and students who are coming to the United States for study. It is estimated that approximately 1,750 have arrived to date under the official Agreement on Scientific, Scholarly, and Educational Exchange. (By the same date, the end of April 1980, approximately 1,000 additional Chinese students have arrived under private auspices for undergraduate and graduate study in American institutions of higher education.)

This publication makes available for the first time the English-language portion (administered in September 1978) of the special examinations used by the authorities of the People's Republic of China in selecting the initial groups of Chinese coming to the United States under the official Exchange Agreement. This information is of interest to American educators concerned with the English-language proficiency of those selected and, to some extent, may contribute to research efforts as well as to admission and/or placement considerations.

The examination proper is preceded by a nelpful introduction by Dr. Robert Barendsen, who obtained the examination, had it translated, and provided relevant background information.

Publication of this examination is another U.S. Office of Education contribution toward helping Americans and others understand education in the People's Republic of China. A recent USOE publication of considerable related interest is *The 1978 National College Entrance Examination in the People's Republic of China*, also edited by Dr. Barendsen. While its content is primarily concerned with the subject set forth in its title, the foreword includes some useful basic information about the initial group of individuals coming to the United States for advanced study under the official Exchange Agreement, those whose English proficiency was tested by the examination translated and reproduced in the present publication.

The earlier publication is available from the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office (Stock Number 017-080-02049-1, $4.25). Single copies of this pamphlet will be available without charge upon request from the U.S. Department of Education.

Robert Leestma
U.S. Office of Education

April 1980

INTRODUCTION

In mid-summer 1978 authorities of the People's Republic of China (PRC) approached American officials (as well as representatives of several other foreign countries) concerning the possibility of sending Chinese abroad to study. Early in the following autumn, negotiations between American and Chinese officials resulted in an agreement providing that some 500 to 700 Chinese would come to the United States for advanced study and research by September 1979.

In anticipation of this agreement the PRC Government, in the late summer of 1978, initiated measures for selecting the individuals who would make up this first group of Chinese going to the United States for training. Special examinations were prepared and given in China to test the knowledge in their specialized fields and the English language competence of potential Chinese participants in the foreign study program.

The examination in English language that was used for this purpose was held in China in September 1978. It included tests of both written and oral English. The complete text of the exam, which was obtained through U.S. Government channels, is reproduced below in English translation. [1]

The text of the examination is of considerable interest and significance, since it provides American Government and college authorities with a concrete indication of the type of exam that the Chinese Government considered appropriate and sufficient for the purpose of determining the English-language proficiency of candidates for study in an English-speaking country. This information, in turn, can substantially assist officials of American colleges and other advanced training sites in making their assessment of a foreign student's English-language competence--an assessment that is a crucial factor in deciding upon an applicant's admissibility and in arranging proper placement and programs for an individual once he or she is accepted.

Some comment on the scoring system used in the examination is perhaps in order. It will be noted that each question on the written part of the exam is individually value-weighted, and that a perfect score on this portion of the exam would be 100 points. (The method for scoring or evaluating the oral part of the examination is not known.)

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1. According to Chinese Government officials consulted by the editor on this question, as of late spring 1980 no subsequent national exam of this kind and for this purpose had been conducted in the PRC.

Comprehensive summary information is not available on the distribution of scores achieved by the approximately 30,000 Chinese candidates who are understood to have taken this September 1978 examination. However, some indication of the level of performance necessary for success on the exam is provided by available data on the scores achieved on the *written* part of the exam by 50 individuals who constituted the first group of Chinese to arrive in the United States for study (at the beginning of 1979). The data reveals that in this group the range of scores achieved on this written test was from 42 to 85.5. Three of the 50 participants scored below 50 points on the test, and 14 scored less than 60 points. The average score achieved was 66.6, and the mean score was 68.75. Thus it would appear that a score of only slightly more than 40 percent on this test was considered by the Chinese authorities to be adequate to indicate that a candidate was competent to handle advanced-level instruction in an English-speaking country.

The content of the examination requires little in the way of comment here. The written part includes questions that are relatively simple in form but in a sizable number of instances probe a candidate's understanding of some rather fine points of English grammar and usage. The translation questions (questions V and VI), which require translation of material from Chinese to English as well as from English to Chinese, are both fairly demanding. The paragraph to be translated from English to Chinese, in particular, is difficult in several respects, including the requirement to render into Chinese terms used in the game of golf, a sport which is little known in China.

The oral part of the examination is perhaps of special interest. It will be noted that for this portion six *alternative* questions were used, with each candidate being confronted with just one of the six questions, presumably chosen at random by the examiner. In each case, the oral question consists of two parts: (1) a short English paragraph, to be read aloud by the examinee, and (2) a "free conversation" period, in which the candidate was required to engage in an impromptu conversation with the examiner. During the conversation period, which usually lasted for about 10 to 15 minutes, the examinee was first asked several questions designed to ascertain whether the paragraph read had been clearly understood, and then was engaged in some 6 to 8 minutes of simple English dialogue about his or her life (i.e., questions about age, place of birth, family, schooling, job, etc.).

Americans who peruse the English-language paragraphs used in the oral test will find them rather interesting. For one thing, although they were used in selecting individuals who would be sent abroad for training mainly in scientific and technical fields, the paragraphs consist of very general language and contain no really technical terms. They are not routine, stereotyped readings, however; most of the paragraphs are fairly sophisticated, and several of them even include wry humor.

It should be noted that, in the original test paper, there are not only *intentional* mistakes in English included for testing purposes, but there are also several presumably *unintentional* errors in the printed text (e.g., question I.6 seems faulty, and there are several lapses in capitalization).

A full English translation of the examination follows.

1978 JOINT EXAMINATION FOR THE SELECTION OF UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE STUDENTS FOR ADVANCED STUDY ABROAD *

/Part I/

English-Language Examination Questions

Question Number	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total Points
Points							

I. *Multiple Choice: (Total 25 points, each blank 1 point) Only one answer to each question is allowed (otherwise will be counted as wrong). Place a check (✓) in front of the letter of the answer you choose; do not put the letter in the blank.*

1. I wish I _____.

   A. had not told him that
   B. didn't tell him that
   C. told him not that
   D. will tell him that

2. Mother warned _____ the electric plug.

   A. her not touch
   B. her not touching
   C. her not to touch
   D. not to touch

3. I can't afford _____ a new dress.

   A. buying her
   B. her to buy
   C. buy for her
   D. to buy her

4. She needs the work _____ before tomorrow.

   A. done B. do C. be done D. be doing

5. That's really kind _____.

   A. of you to say so
   B. for you to say so
   C. of you saying so
   D. for you saying so

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* Editor's note: In this reproduction of the exam text, the portions of the examination that are rendered in italics were in Chinese in the original; the remaining portions were in English in the original. The material in square brackets has been added by the editor.

6. I can't understand _____ at that poor child.

A. you to laugh
B. you laugh
C. why laugh
D. you laughing

7. You'd better _____.

A. to have your hair cut
B. to have cut your hair
C. have your hair cut
D. had your hair cut

8. There was so much noise the speaker couldn't make himself _____.

A. hearing B. to hear C. heard D. being heard

9. The book _____ isn't in the library.

A. what I need
B. that I need it
C. which I need it
D. I need

10. It was _____ that a hundred people looked lost in it.

A. so a large room
B. a so large room
C. such a large room
D. such large a room

11. We'll take _____ put you to the trouble of fetching more.

A. less sugar than
B. less sugar rather
C. less sugar rather than
D. lesser sugar than

12. I'll certainly work all next week except when it _____.

A. will be raining
B. will rain
C. would rain
D. is raining

13. He _____ when I go to see him.

A. will always work
B. has always been working
C. has always worked
D. is always working

14. My father _____ George quite well; they were introduced at a party.

A. is knowing B. was knowing C. knows D. had been knowing

15. _____ me or aren't you?

A. will you help
B. Have you helped
C. Are you going to help
D. will you be helping

16. It _____ John and Mary who helped me the other day.

A. has been B. are C. was D. were

17. In my school _____ us study English.

A. a lot of B. a great deal of C. much of D. a few

18. _____ do you prefer, this one or that one?

A. What B. Which C. How D. Whose

19. Just tell me what you're capable _____.

A. about B. at C. in D. of

20. I've just bought a dictionary, and I'm pleased _____ it.

A. by B. of C. with D. for

21. If we _____ yesterday, we _____ the work.

A. weren't interrupted; would finish
B. didn't interrupt; would have finished
C. hadn't interrupted; had finished
D. hadn't been interrupted; would have finished

22. The recent issue of this periodical is worth _____.

A. to read B. reading C. for you to read D. for you reading

23. The construction of the laboratory _____ by the end of next month.

A. must have completed B. must have been completed
C. must be completed D. must complete

24. Statistics is a discipline _____ all the other sciences.

A. affected B. affecting
C. to be affected D. being affected

25. We didn't see him at the lecture yesterday. He _____ it.

A. mustn't attend B. can't have attended
C. would have not attend D. needn't have attended

II. *Enter an appropriate preposition in each blank: (Total 10 points, each blank ½ point)*

1. They prevented me _____ working _____ my homework __ __ several hours _____ Wednesday.

2. _____ the age of forty John was dismissed _____ his job _____ an hour's notice _____ no reason at all.

3. I have been _____ work here _____ a month, but I have learnt nothing _____ my instructors; therefore, I have nothing to thank them _____.

4. He agrees _____ me that we must make sure _____ the facts so that we can discuss them _____ others and distinguish the true _____ the false.

5. He did nothing but laugh _____ her _____ beginning _____ end and that was very foolish _____ him.

III. *Correct the errors in the following sentences: (Total 25 points; each sentence 1 point) (Make the corrections on the test paper; you do not need to copy the sentence)*

1. He is very strong. He can be able to work for another hour.

2. There are always a lot of good news over the radio.

3. we must have to work really hard from now on.

4. He would have come much earlier if he has known the party would start at 8:00.

5. The letter I've just received from my father is too long to read it.

6. I'm sure I asked the boy which had borrowed my book to return it to me as soon as possible.

7. He could not hardly spend any time watching TV.

8. I think they're not carrying out the experiment at the moment.

9. It seems to me that the cold weather started more earlier this year than last year.

10. This is the girl whom I sat next to her at the meeting yesterday.

11. As I have run out of paper, I have to borrow some from the comrade live next door.

12. My little brother is too young that he can't dress himself.

13. I have to have my radio repair so that I can listen to the radio English course.

14. If I was knowing why he was absent, I would tell you, but I'm afraid I don't.

15. Peter thinks that he is very clever than all the other boys in his class.

16. The letter I posted it to my mother over a week ago has not reached her yet.

17. My children are very well look after in the kindergarten.

18. Would you be kind enough as to open the door?

19. This book isn't belonged to me.

20. I'd like some more paper to write.

21. He came here before two hours.

22. I'll finish this work after two weeks.

23. He told me what she had said it behind my back.

24. No sooner he came home he was asked to start on another journey.

25. He scarcely got into the room than the telephone rang.

IV. *Read the following short essay and select the correct answers from the choices given: (Total 10 points, each selection 2 points)*

I was being tested for a driving licence for the third time. I had been asked to drive in heavy traffic and had done so successfully. After having been instructed to drive out of town, I began to acquire confidence. Sure that I had passed, I was almost beginning to enjoy my test. The examiner must have been pleased with my performance, for he smiled and said, 'Just one more thing, Mr. Eames. Let us suppose that a child suddenly crosses the road in front of you. As soon as I tap on the window, I want the car to be stopped immediately.' I continued driving and after some time, the examiner tapped loudly. Though the sound could be heard clearly, it took me a long time to react. I suddenly pressed the brake pedal hard and we were both thrown forward. The examiner looked at me sadly. 'Mr. Eames,' he said, in a mournful voice, 'you've just killed that child!'

1. When the driver was asked to drive out of town, he began to feel confident because

a. he was being tested for the third time.
b. he was driving away from the heavy traffic.
c. he had done wonderfully well in driving through the heavy traffic.

2. He was beginning to enjoy his test because

   a. he was now in the open country.
   b. he was sure that he had passed.
   c. had a feeling that the examiner was agreeable.

3. The examiner smiled at him, so he thought that the examiner

   a. was satisfied with what he had done so far.
   b. was going to be more pleasant with him.
   c. was feeling amused.

4. When the examiner tapped loudly on the window, the driver

   a. pressed the brake pedal hard immediately.
   b. failed to stop the car at the signal.
   c. heard the tapping only a long time later.

5. So we can well imagine that in the end the driver

   a. must have been arrested for having killed a child.
   b. must have failed in the test.
   c. must have damaged his car badly.

V. *Translate into English: (Total 15 points, each sentence 3 points)*

1. *Do you know when printing was invented, and how it got to the West?*

2. *What you are discussing is just one of the problems we will resolve today.*

3. *Professor Chang leaves the laboratory only after his experiments are successful.*

4. *It is expected that, in the not too distant future, China will certainly catch up with the most advanced countries in the world in the fields of science and technology.*

5. *As you all know, to make original contributions in science and technology one must be both extremely hard-working and also daring enough to break new ground.*

VI. *Translate into Chinese: (Total 15 points)*

The difficulties that would have to be encountered by anyone who attempted to explore the Moon would be incomparably greater than those that have to be faced in the endeavour to reach the summit of Mount Jolmo Lungma. In two respects only would the lunar explorer have the advantage. In the

first place movement would be less fatiguing because the gravitational pull of the Moon is not very great, the weight of the Moon being only about one-eightieth of that of the Earth. If the Moon had an atmosphere like that of the Earth, a man playing golf on the Moon would find that he could drive his ball for a mile without much difficulty. The second advantage the lunar explorer would have over the climbers on Mount Jolmo Lungma would be the absence of strong wind to contend against. The Moon having no atmosphere, there can be no wind; nor, of course, can there be any noise, for sound is carried by the air. The Moon is a world that is completely still and where utter silence prevails.

/Part II/

Examination Questions in Oral English

(1)

I. *Read aloud the following short paragraph, and be prepared to answer questions on it:*

Can I Help You, Madam? *

A woman in blue jeans stood at the window of an expensive shop. Though she hesitated for a moment, she finally went in and asked to see a dress that was in the window. The assistant who served her did not like the way she was dressed. Glancing at her scornfully, he told her that the dress was sold. The woman walked out of the shop angrily and decided to punish the assistant next day. She returned to the shop the following morning dressed in a fur coat with a handbag in one hand and a long umbrella in the other. After seeking out the rude assistant she asked for the same dress. Not realizing who she was, the assistant was eager to serve her this time. With great difficulty, he climbed into the shop window to get the dress. As soon as she saw it, the woman said she did not like it. She enjoyed herself making the assistant bring almost everything in the window before finally buying the dress she had first asked for.

jeans (dʒinz) *jeans*

hesitate ('heziteit) *hesitate*

glance (gla:ns) *glance*

scornfully ('skɔ:nfli) *scornfully*

II. *Free conversation*

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* Editor's note: In the paragraph below (and in the five other following paragraphs that make up the oral portion /Part II/ of the examination), the words that are underlined here were in italics in the original test paper.

(2)

I. *Read aloud the following paragraph, and be prepared to answer questions on it:*

Am I All Right?

While John Gilbert was in hospital, he asked his doctor to tell him whether his operation had been successful, but the doctor refused to do so. The following day, the patient asked for a bedside telephone. When he was alone, he telephoned the hospital exchange and asked for Doctor Millington. When the doctor answered the phone, Mr. Gilbert said he was inquiring about a certain patient, a Mr. John Gilbert. He asked if Mr. Gilbert's operation had been successful and the doctor told him that it had been. He then asked when Mr. Gilbert would be allowed to go home and the doctor told him that he would have to stay in hospital for another two weeks. Then Dr. Millington asked the caller if he was a relative of the patient. 'No,' answered the patient, 'I am Mr. John Gilbert.'

John Gilbert ('dʒɔn 'gilbət) *(personal name)*

operation (ɔpə'rei ʃən) *operation*

Millington ('miliŋtən) *(personal name)*

inquire ('inkwaiə) *inquire*

relative ('relətiv) *relative*

II. *Free conversation*

(3)

I. *Read aloud the following paragraph, and be prepared to answer questions on it:*

Expensive and Uncomfortable

When a plane from London arrived at Sydney airport, workers began to unload a number of wooden boxes which contained clothing. No one could account for the fact that one of the boxes was extremely heavy. It suddenly occurred to one of the workers to open up the box. He was astonished at what he found. A man was lying in the box on top of a pile of woollen goods. He was so surprised at being discovered that he did not even try to run away. After he was arrested, the man admitted hiding in the box before the plane left London. He had had a long and

uncomfortable trip, for he had been confined to the wooden box for over ten hours. The man was ordered to pay £345 for the cost of the trip. The normal price of a ticket is only £230!

Sydney ('sidni) *Sydney*

account for (ə'kaunt) *account for*

astonish (əs'tɔniʃ) *astonish*

woollen ('wulən) *woollen*

confine (kən'fain) *confine*

II. *Free conversation*

(4)

I. *Read aloud the following short paragraph, and be prepared to answer questions on it:*

Hot Snake

At last firemen have put out a big forest fire in California. Since then, they have been trying to find out how the fire began. Forest fires are often caused by broken glass or by cigarette ends which people carelessly throw away. Yesterday the firemen examined the ground very carefully, but were not able to find any broken glass. They were also quite sure that a cigarette end did not start the fire. This morning, however, a fireman accidentally discovered the cause. He noticed the remains of a snake which was wound round the electric wires of a 16,000-volt power line. In this way, he was able to solve the mystery. The explanation was simple but very unusual. A bird had snatched up the snake from the ground and then dropped it on to the wires. The snake then wound itself round the wires. When it did so, it sent sparks down to the ground and these immediately started a fire.

California (kæli'fɔ:niə) *California*

accidentally (æksi'dentəli) *accidentally*

remains (ri'meinz) *remains*

wound (waund) *wound*

snatch (snætʃ) *snatch*

II. *Free Conversation*

(5)

I. *Read aloud the following short paragraph, and be prepared to answer questions on it:*

SOS

When a light passenger plane flew off course some time ago, it crashed in the mountains and its pilot was killed. The only passengers, a young woman and her two daughters, were unhurt. It was the middle of winter. Snow lay thick on the ground. The woman knew that the nearest village was miles away. When it grew dark, she turned a suit-case into a bed and put the children inside it, covering them with all the clothes she could find. During the night, it got terribly cold. The woman kept as near as she could to the children and even tried to get into the case herself, but it was too small. Early next morning, she heard planes passing overhead and wondered how she could send a signal. Then she had an idea. She stamped out the letters 'SOS' in the snow. Fortunately, a pilot saw the signal and sent a message by radio to the nearest town. It was not long before a helicopter arrived on the scene to rescue the survivors of the plane crash.

crash (kræʃ) *crash*

passenger ('pæsəndʒə) *passenger*

stamp out (stæmp) *stamp out*

rescue ('reskju:) *rescue*

survivors (sə:'vaivəz) *survivors*

II. *Free conversation*

(6)

I. *Read aloud the following short paragraph, and be prepared to answer questions on it:*

A Famous Clock

When you visit London, one of the first things you will see is Big Ben, the famous clock which can be heard all over the world on the B.B.C. If the Houses of Parliament had not been burned down in 1834, the great clock would never have been erected. Big Ben takes its name from Sir Benjamin Hall who was responsible for the making of the clock when the new Houses of Parliament were being built. It is not only of immense

size, but is extremely accurate as well. Officials from Greenwich Observatory have the clock checked twice a day. On the B.B.C. you can hear the clock when it is actually striking because microphones are connected to the clock tower. Big Ben has rarely gone wrong. Once, however, it failed to give the correct time. A painter who had been working on the tower hung a pot of paint on one of the hands and slowed it down!

Big Ben (big ben) *(name of a thing)*

Sir Benjamin Hall (sə: 'bendʒ'əmin 'hɔ:l) *(personal name)*

Parliament ('pa:ləmənt) *Parliament*

immense (i'mens) *immense*

Greenwich Observatory ('grinidʒ əb'zə:vətəri) *Greenwich Observatory*

microphone ('maicrəfoun) *microphone*

pot (pɔt) *pot*

II. *Free conversation*

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